

Abstract of Proposal

Stanislaus County Office of Education

CDS Code 50-00000

In 1990, Martin Petersen campaigned for the office of Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools, with the commitment to provide relevant, rigorous education for high school students. Immediately after assuming the superintendency, he convened a Stanislaus County Blue Ribbon Task Force composed of educators and business representatives to examine and address the following: literacy, education for work, and at-risk youth. In 1994, Stanislaus County Office of Education's (SCOE) Project Riverbank was one of twenty Urban-Rural School-to-Work Opportunities Grants funded by the United States Department of Education and the United States Department of Labor. This five-year project developed a career academy structure within a traditional high school to promote rigorous, relevant academics.

During the past six years SCOE's active participation in and support for Stanislaus Partners in Education (SPIE), a non-profit 501.3c foundation has resulted in ongoing dialogue with representatives from K-16 education, business, labor and government. Many business partners are encouraging substantive changes in secondary education that coincide with the desires of high school students who want to graduate with skills that would allow them to transition into

the job field and parents who wanted children to feel directed towards something meaningful.

Business representatives, educators, and students have defined a gap in the continuum of educational experience. This points to a serious design flaw in secondary education by not providing relevant skills needed by employers within the region. Years of study, collaboration, partnerships and pilot projects of relevant technical and social training have lead the county superintendent, the co-chairman of the state California County Superintendents Educational Services Association/Association of California School Administrators Schools-to-Career Task Force, to propose the development of a charter high school committed to addressing the needs of students and business. During 1998-99, the staff of the SCOE will complete the following strategic planning steps:

- Review current data and seek additional data related to the needs of regional businesses leading to specific job skills;
- Review any existing high school models throughout the United States particularly those implementing school-to-career effectively;
- With the collaboration of the education and business community, develop curriculum to be implemented in the new charter school;
- Address levels of certification of student competency that have meaning in the regional workplace, prepare them for advanced technical training or community college/university;

- Develop a facility concept that supports the curriculum;
- Define an administrative structure that facilitates the goals of the school;
- Develop a site budget;
- Initiate the recruitment of staff;
- Define strategies for attracting students; and,
- Write the charter implementation grant.

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

I. The Charter School's Educational Vision

A. Baseline Information about the School

Stanislaus County is both rural and urban in nature. Modesto, a city of 170,000, makes up one-third of the population with the rest distributed amongst a number of smaller communities. The county has slowly evolved from an agriculture-base toward a light industry, food processing, service-oriented economy. The county has 29 school districts, with a total of 19 high schools in eight districts. There are over 35,000 students enrolled in the area's high schools. These pupils represent an ethnically diverse population of 55.5% Caucasian, 32.8% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.2% African American, .08% American Indian and .07% Filipino.

The four year completion rate is 84%, with vocational education students at 59.6%; UC/CSU course completion is 26.3%; SAT/ACT rate is 13.2%; Advanced Placement rate is 6.4%; UC attendance is 2.9%; CSU attendance is 8.5%; community college attendance is 37.3%; LEP is 11.3%; AFDC is 18.6%; and free or reduced lunch is 27.9%.

B. Educational Vision

The goal of this charter school proposal is to create a high school that is restructured around career majors and utilizes the rigorous, relevant academic experience as a stepping stone to internships/ apprenticeships and ultimately to specific job certification. The proposed charter school will be significantly different from a traditional high school in that every student entering will select a career pathway that will be linked with exploration, shadowing, mentoring and a business internship. The school curriculum will contain the following:

- Career paths leading to jobs needed by businesses within the region;
- Rigorous academic content and with high performance standards;
- Technology training;
- A strong link among all school activities and the workplace;
- Comprehensive career counseling; and,
- Individual education career plans.

The charter school will:

- Serve all students regardless of academic achievement or handicapping conditions; and,
- Create a school environment that engenders pupils with the following character skills: responsibility, initiative, perseverance, courage, respect, honesty, compassion, loyalty, adaptability, and deliberativeness.

To date, SCOE initiatives include the following:

- A thorough review of the regional job market completed by a Stanislaus Blue Ribbon Task Force;
- A review of job skills needed by area employers accomplished through the efforts of the Stanislaus Partners in Education (SPIE);
- A study that provided a comparison of job skills identified by businesses, and what county secondary schools can implement;
- The implementation of federally-funded school, Project Riverbank; and,
- The implementation of a job skills academy in cooperation with Modesto Junior College, Modesto City Schools and SPIE.

While the former has had a positive effect, none has had the desired impact on the traditional secondary program. Business leaders, parents and students all share the need for a high school that provides specific training to allow pupils to transition from high school to work or to two-year or four-year college/university. The SCOE, in partnership with local districts and businesses has developed school-to-career programs in local high schools. A health, graphic arts, international baccalaureate degree and food pathways are examples of the academies operating in local high schools in Modesto and Turlock. The job skill academy was another initiative to train youth in Stanislaus County to seek and achieve productive and successful employment or advanced training.

Even though these programs are exciting and successful, they don't meet the needs of the larger number of businesses and citizens in the county. The number of openings in these programs is extremely limited. The career academies serve a small percentage of the high school students in Stanislaus County. It is the remaining high school students in our county that our charter school will target. It is our educational vision that all students in our county will have the opportunity to participate in a charter school incorporating an integrated technical/academic program that provides a curriculum rich in the basic components of work ethic, professional attitude and job skills required of students to become successful employees of businesses starving for qualified workers within our community.

It is also our intent to eventually enroll community school students in this program as they master pre-employment skills at the local community school. The charter school will operate an adult literacy program in the evening hours. Many of our agricultural and industrial partners have requested and need a viable educational program that offers reading, writing, and math skills training to their workforce including migrant workers.

II. Description of Grant Project Goals and Activities for Approval of a Charter Proposal

A. Grant Project Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the charter school is to provide high school students with skills for the world of employment. During the grant-planning phase, the objectives of the SCOE Superintendent, the County Board of Education and the staff will be to develop the following:

- A methodology for assessment of relevant student pre-skills upon entry into the charter high school;
- Clear student outcomes related to identified entry-level skills required by businesses within the region;
- A school curriculum suited to the needs required in the world of work;
- A school facility concept compatible with the new curriculum; and,
- An administrative structure that furthers the goals of the school.

The number one priority of the County Superintendent is this charter grant initiative. As a result, all of the divisions of this organization will be responsible for creating the various components of the new high school. Intra-office support for specific projects will be the following:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Department or Division</u>
Curriculum Development	Instructional Support Services
Professional Development	Instructional Support Services
Formation of Administrative Structure	Student Services
Facilities Conceptualization	Student Services and

	Instructional Support
	Services
Evaluation of Staffing Needs	Personnel Department
Attraction of Potential Students	Public Affairs Office
Budget Plan	Business Office
Facility Acquisition	Business Office
Assessment of Needs for Disabled	
Students	Special Education

SCOE offers a wide array of experiences in curriculum and staff development, a long-term commitment to School-to-Career education, and vigorous support for district's assessment of student academic performance. SCOE is an effective lead agency for numerous collaborative education projects including technology in the curriculum, multi-disciplinary education, prevention education, literacy, preschool programs, etc. School-To-Career grants include Project Riverbank (a five-year project --\$450,000) Region VI School-to-Career (an annual five county coordinator project --\$56,000), a Central Valley Consortium Agricultural Education Tech Prep Grant (a five-year project --\$400,000), an Assessment in Career Education Grant (a statewide staff development project --\$100,000), and a Summer Youth Employment Grant (an eight-week program with academic and work experience for 160 students --\$356,000).

SCOE employs staff who are respected as statewide leaders in School-to-Career. Chris King, Director of Curriculum and Staff Development; Judy Piscitello, Director of Career Education/ROP; and Sally Shepherd-Cofer, Career Education/ROP Consultant will provide leadership in the following areas:

- Review of existing secondary school-to-work models;
- Review of data gathered by the Stanislaus County Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Stanislaus Partners in Education; and,
- Leadership in the development of an integrated high school curriculum that connects critical thinking, academic and technical skills.

B. Identification of Planning needs for the Development of an Effective School

1. Educational Capacity

The following examples of proven methods of teaching and learning will be utilized:

- Brain-based learning: Teaching in the context of making personal connections for students to bring meaning to the educational experience. The SCOE charter school will utilize strategies that allow students to view instructional activities as part of a larger concept that connects to the student's personal awareness.
- Multiple intelligence: Utilizing a variety of instructional strategies that allow the visual as well as linguistic student to succeed; and,

- Strategy intervention models (SIMS): Specific strategies used to teach students basic academic skills.
- 4MAT, a meta-model structure that honors student diversity of learning styles through developing curriculum that utilizes the natural cycle of learning. This model has been used at the SCOE Alternative Education School and has proven to be effective. The use of 4MAT results in empowering students to become engaged in the learning process thus decreasing negative and disruptive behavior

Since the business partners are encouraging substantive changes in secondary education, the proposed charter school will incorporate changes that will result in the following outcome for students:

1. Entrance into the job market with a high skill job;
2. Enrollment in an apprenticeship program;
3. Enrollment in public or private vocation training; or,
4. Enrollment at a two or four year college.

The business partners have voiced the need for high school graduates to meet and exceed the SCANS skills--critical thinking, problem solving, working as a team, and other skills relevant for successful functioning in the world of work.

The assessment system will include the STAR testing program, the Career-Technical Assessment Program, and the Stanislaus County Office of Education formative assessment system, which will inform the teacher of the ongoing

progress of students toward standard achievement. Performance assessments to demonstrate learning will also include student projects, portfolios and written scenarios to promote problem solving.

2. Business and Organization Management Capacity of the School

An annual balanced budget for the charter school will be presented for County Board of Education approval each year. SCOE will conduct the financial operations through established procedures and follow its Business Plan. The Business Office will be responsible (but not limited to) payroll, insurance, contracts, audits, and other related fiscal matters. The SCOE has extensive experience in business and organization management.

3. Collaboration and Networking Strategies

Over the past few years collective knowledge and support of the SCOE has involved the following community groups and individuals in the development of data related to this charter proposal. These groups and individuals are committed to providing on-going technical support needed to make the charter school a success by keeping it relevant:

- Private Industry Council (PIC);
- Modesto Community College (Department of Vocational Education);
- California State University Stanislaus;
- Modesto Chamber of Commerce;
- Pacific Southwest Containers (Scott Ellis, Director of Job Training);

- Gallo Winery (Ron Emerzian, Director, Job Training & Development);
- Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department (Les Weidman, Sheriff);
- Stanislaus County Probation Department (Bob Norem, Chief Probation Officer); and,
- Interagency Children's Coordinating Council (comprised of local governmental and private agencies); and,
- Stanislaus Partners in Education (SPIE).

SPIE, a non-profit 501.3c foundation, was established in 1991 by educators and business representatives to support adopt-a-school, student recognition, and stay-in-school initiatives. In 1994, SPIE and the Stanislaus County WorkForce Coalition--a business, government and labor partnership formed to promote school-to-work programs--agreed to become one organization. Attendance at partnership meetings has been consistently at the 95%+ level, an indication of the dedication and enthusiasm of its membership. SPIE has had a successful track record, implementing 65 Adopt-a-School, Stay-in-School, and Student Recognition partnerships.

4. Overall Program Evaluation

If the overall goal of the charter school is to provide students with skills for the world of work, the program assessment should be related to success of graduates in post-school employment. It is the intent of the charter school to continually gather data from graduates at one and five years after graduation.

Annual focus groups composed of students, parents, and business representatives will be used to gather assessment data for continuous improvement. This information will be utilized as a further check to determine the effectiveness of the school experience as it will serve students, and determines the needs to be modified, changed or deleted.

C. Support for Getting the Charter Petition Circulated and Approved

1. Specific Activities and Work to Be Done

The planning phase of this grant will be on a fast-track implementation ending June 30, 1999.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Gather information related to existing		
Secondary models	4,000.	9/1/98
Write curriculum	15,000.	3/1/99
Develop a school administrative		
Organization plan	0.	3/1/99
Canvas region for prospective faculty	5,000.	4/1/99
Define facility concept and location(s)	5,000.	4/1/99
Develop and implement methodology		
for attracting potential students*	<u>2,500.</u>	6/1/99
TOTAL	31,500.	

It is important to note that an additional \$8,450 will be generated from SCOE, as well as seeking business support (see budget sheet, other funds column and budget narrative for further details).

*Ms. Jane Johnston, SCOE Community Affairs Officer, will utilize all available media outlets, including print, television and a weekly half-hour radio program to recruit students. Ms. Johnston has recently received a California Senate Resolution honoring her “as an outstanding contributor to enhancing quality education in California and Stanislaus County.”

2. Justification for Use of Grant Funds

Once the planning grant is awarded, SCOE staff will adhere to the timeline provided in #C1 and authorize funds to complete the following:

- Hire a consultant to write the school charter and implementation grant;
- Develop an administrative structure to provide leadership through planning and development of the charter to the opening of the school;
- Review existing school-to-career effective models of schools throughout the United States;
- Take information gained nationally and link it with the needs of businesses within our region;
- Develop a complete course of study for the new charter high school;
- Specify facility characteristics and obtain a location for the school; and,

- Identify local media to share charter concept with the public and solicit prospective students.

III. Self-Assessment and Procedures for Monitoring Progress towards

Completion of the Charter Proposal

As mentioned earlier, the development of an alternative Charter High School is the number one priority of the SCOE Superintendent and County Board of Education. Mr. Norman Lee, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, will be responsible for the development of the Charter School plan. SCOE is committed to the completion of activities prior to June 30, 1999, utilizing the extraordinary talent of the total organization. The timeline for completion of tasks is listed above. Through this phase, SCOE will meet all requirements of the federal law governing the public charter schools program including the fourteen elements.